WELCOME ADDRESS

PRESENTED TO

General *K. M. Cariappa*, O. B. E.,

Commander-in-Chief, Army.

By

The President and Members of the District Soldiers' Club, Vellore.

on 11th June 1951.

Sir,

We deem it a great privilege to welcome you amidst us this evening, and it is hardly necessary for us to say how happy we are in acknowledging the signal honour you have done us by visiting Vellore in general and Ex-servicemen in particular.

It is with great pride Sir, that we review your brilliant Military Career; you were the first Indian Cadet to be Commissioned in 1919, the Ist Indian Brigadier to visit U. S A. in 1944 one of the first two students at the Imperial Defence College England 1946 and the first Indian C-in-C in 1949. It is also a great honour to the citizens of Vellore, that the 1st Indian C-in-C has visited their historic town.

We, Ex-servicemen are painfully aware of the general existing feeling that the grievances of Ex-servicemen are not justifiable, and that the best occupation for most of them is to go back and till the soil. As the Commande-in-Chief is alreaIy aware that the North Arcot District has been the 2nd heaviest recruited district in the Madras State, As such our expectation for the resettlement of demobilised soldiers has also been keen, We do not want to mar the happiness of this occasion by delaring on our grievances, but at the same time we venture to bring to the notice of our Commander-in-Chief that large numbers of Ex-servicemen are yet to be resettled satisfactorily.

We are at present to take our chances with civilians without any concession shown on our behalf. We are given only temporary jobs, which are liable to be terminated at any time. Lesser qualified Ex-servicemen are almost on the verge of despair, suffering unemployment on the one hand and unsympathetic attitude on the other. Ex-servicemen are not generally able to get permits to run a certain business and the allottment of land to them is very rare. It is very painful to mention that even in the case of recruitment to the army, the previous war service of the candidate is not recovered for purposes of age which is being done in Civil Government Departments. It is superfluous for us to mention at this stage that our loyalty to Free India is unbounded and natural. Having been trained and disciplined in our previous Career, we are anxious to serve and prove our worth to the Government.

We therefore plead with you, Sir, to make kind efforts on our behalf so that more facilities may be granted to Ex-servicemen by the Govenment to remove the handicaps which we have referred to above. We would particularly request you, Sir, to kindly take up the matter of deducting the period of war service for purposes of age, in the army recruitment which is a serious obstacle at the moment to Ex-servicemen.

It is also felt that the Secretaries of the D. S. S. & A. Boards should be Ex-servicemen only so that they can have more sympathies with Ex-servicemen. When the question was considered as early as 1949 by the Commission sent from Delhi, we understand that the matter was dropped owing to lack of finance. We suggest that if it is a question of finance, that Honorary Secretaries may be appointed with minor allowances such as T. A. etc, We strongly feel that a full time enthusiastic ex-servicemen should be Secretaries of Dt. S. S. & A. Boards so that the work might be carried on with more zeal and devotion for the welfare of the Ex-servicemen.

We also request that arrangements may kindly be made to give representation to Ex-servicemen in the Legislatures both in the centre and in the states and other Cultural Institutions such as Senate etc. As early as 1945. the Leaders of the Congress and Muslim League parties were addressed that Ex-servicemen should be given 3 seats one representing each arm of service in the Central Assembly. They then assured us to consider the matter at a later stage. We request you Sir, to take up the matter and lend your aid for a fair claim on the part of Ex-servicemen, and do you best for them. We Ex-servicemen, ask this from the bitter depths of our hearts. We thank you once again Sir, for kindly responding to our humble invitation and for having honoured us with your presence this happy evening.

It is our prayer that that the Hand of God may guide you in all ways, so that you may be a fountain of useful service to many.

We remain Sir,

President and members of the District Soldiers' Club,
North Arcot, Vellore.